



Director of
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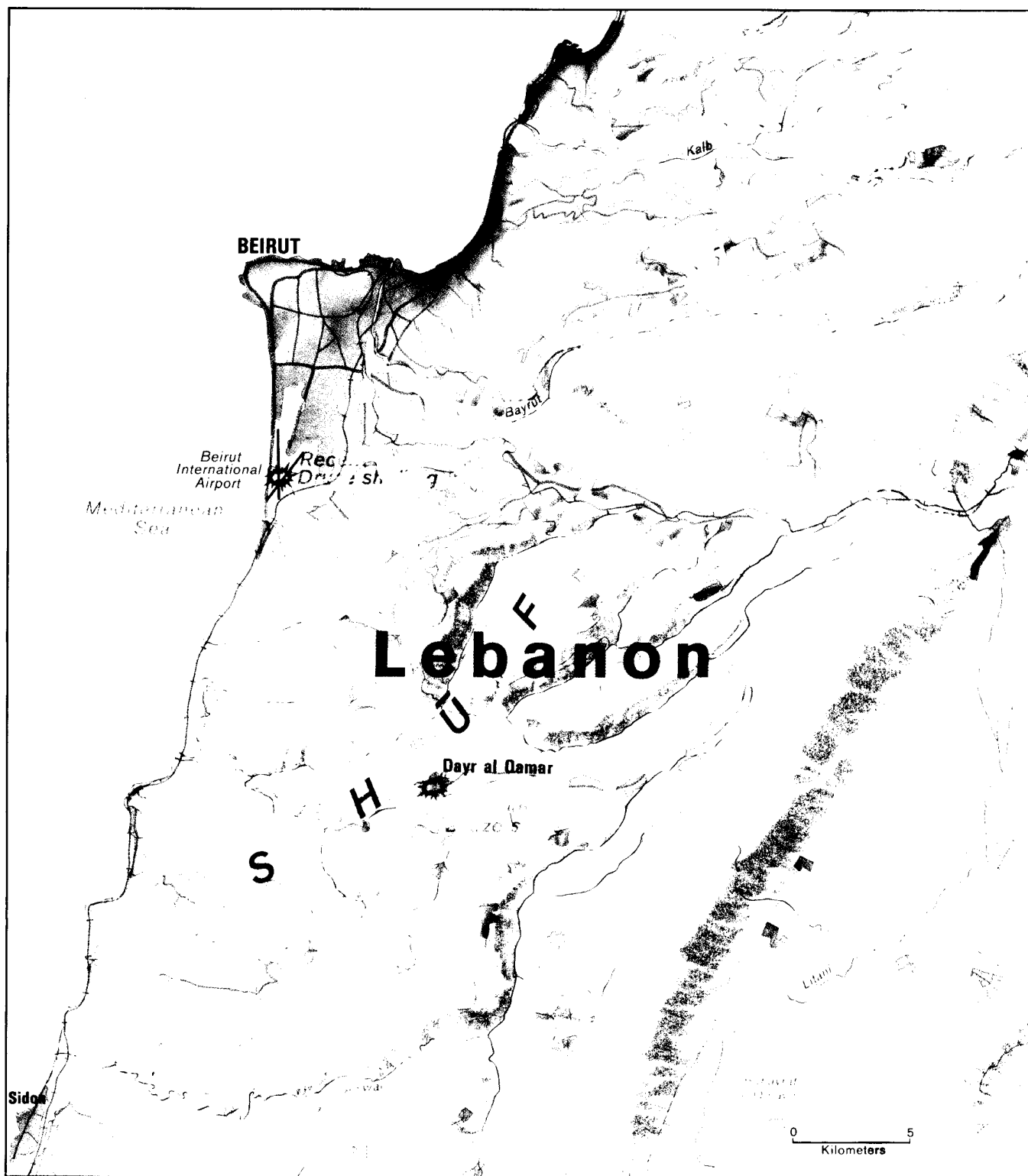
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LEBANON: Tensions Rising

Recent incidents of violence around Beirut and the continuing siege of a Christian town in the Shuf are heightening Christian-Druze tensions, which may lead to a new round of all-out fighting and prevent the reopening of Beirut airport. [redacted]

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The US Embassy reports the Druze community is extremely angry about the murder of a prominent Druze religious leader in Beirut on Thursday. The Druze have accused the Christian Lebanese Forces militia of the killing. The government imposed a curfew, and Muslims held a general strike in the capital yesterday. [redacted]

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[redacted] recent Druze shelling of the airport has been in retaliation for increased shelling by the Lebanese Army of Druze positions in the mountains and Christian militia kidnappings of Druze and Shias at illegal checkpoints south of Beirut.

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[redacted]

At the same time, tensions are growing in the Christian community over the three-month-long Druze siege of some 12,000 to 15,000 Christian refugees in Dayr al Qamar. Hardships suffered by the refugees have increased in recent weeks, according to press accounts. [redacted]

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Christian leaders have condemned the siege and have appealed to the US, Israel, and the Vatican for help. Druze officials, however, maintain that the siege will not be lifted until Lebanese Forces militiamen agree to leave the town without their weapons. [redacted]

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Comment: Anger among Druze and Christian militiamen may precipitate increasing cease-fire violations in the near future. In this tense atmosphere, the airport and US Marine positions there will remain targets. [redacted]

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The situation at Dayr al Qamar probably will become desperate with the onset of winter. This will increase the need for medical supplies and shelter. [redacted]

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USSR-LEBANON: Offer of Closer Cooperation

The USSR's reported offer to cooperate with President Gemayel's government in efforts to reach a Lebanese settlement appears designed both to complicate US attempts to help arrange an agreement and to establish a channel to keep informed about any negotiations. []

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A Lebanese diplomat in Moscow has told US Embassy officers that Soviet Foreign Ministry officials, in two separate meetings at their request last Monday, suggested to him that the two countries should consult regularly on Lebanon and offered assistance in achieving a settlement. One of the Soviets suggested that Moscow could draft a "plan" and advised that the US be kept informed to ensure it would not try to scuttle the effort. []

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The only condition the Soviets made was that they could not support the Lebanese-Israeli withdrawal agreement. They claimed, moreover, that they have no leverage with Syria and thus would be unable to alter President Assad's policies. []

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Comment: The diplomat may have embellished the story to help Gemayel during his visit to Washington. The US Embassy says the diplomat favors joint US-Soviet action to resolve Lebanon's problems. []

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The Soviets may hope that Gemayel, if he could be persuaded that Moscow is prepared to play a constructive role, would be less willing to accede to a US-proposed solution. []

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The approach also may be a result of Moscow's frustration at the Syrians' unwillingness to consult on Lebanon. Soviet officials recently have complained to Arabs and Westerners that Syria does not keep the USSR informed. []

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Moscow has expressed support for a unified Lebanon free of foreign forces, but it probably does not expect to be granted a role in any negotiations. All parties are likely to recognize that the Soviets, without a demonstrated willingness to use leverage on Damascus, could contribute little toward reaching a settlement. As the Foreign Ministry official suggested, Moscow almost certainly would be unwilling to alienate Assad by putting pressure on him to make concessions. []

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USSR: Press Conference on INF Deployments

A high-level press conference scheduled for Monday in Moscow may reveal more about the USSR's response to new US missile deployments in Western Europe. [redacted]

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The Foreign Ministry announced yesterday that chief of the General Staff Ogarkov, First Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko, and chief of the party's International Information Department Zamyatin will discuss INF deployments. The three appeared together on 9 September to present the USSR's version of the downing of the South Korean airliner, and Korniyenko appeared with Ogarkov's principal deputy, Akhromeyev, on 14 September to discuss INF issues. [redacted]

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Comment: The press conference should provide additional information on Soviet countermeasures to the new NATO deployments, outlined in the statement of 24 November issued in the name of General Secretary Andropov. The officials may announce that new "operational-tactical" missiles are beginning to arrive in Eastern Europe. Andropov's statement noted that preparations for deploying these missiles were being "accelerated." [redacted]

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The three officials are unlikely to offer any moderation of Moscow's current hardline position on resuming INF negotiations. For now, the Soviets probably will continue to insist that talks cannot continue unless the US and its allies are willing to return to the predeployment level of forces. [redacted]

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The joint appearance of representatives of the military, Foreign Ministry, and party also presumably is intended, like the previous conferences, to demonstrate unity. The Soviets may feel a particular need to do so now in order to counter Western press speculation that Andropov's illness has resulted in a drift in policy. [redacted]

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NICARAGUA: More Peace Initiatives

The Sandinista amnesty for Miskito Indians and the insurgents' offer to negotiate with the regime are unlikely to lead to reconciliation.

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The government on Thursday freed some 300 Miskito prisoners and pardoned all Nicaraguans who have committed counterrevolutionary crimes in the northeast after December 1981, when thousands of Indians fled to Honduras to escape government repression.

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Several anti-Sandinista insurgent groups asked US officials in Panama on Thursday to arrange peace talks with the Sandinistas. According to press reports, the insurgents offered to lay down their arms in exchange for participation in free elections.

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Meanwhile, the Sandinistas have announced they presented new proposals to representatives of the Contadora countries—Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, and Panama—who met yesterday in Panama. The Panamanian Foreign Minister says the Contadora countries are assembling treaty proposals by the Central American nations, and they do not plan to propose their own draft.

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Comment: The Sandinistas apparently suppressed a decision by the Supreme Court last September to set aside the Miskito convictions because of abuses of the judicial process. By proposing amnesty now, Managua is trying to suggest that it is more flexible on domestic issues and that it wants to negotiate with the US. The amnesty offer is unlikely to have much effect in the Indian areas of the northeast because the government is continuing to repress the Miskitos.

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The anti-Sandinista insurgents probably calculate that Managua will reject negotiations, but they are making the offer to embarrass the regime on the eve of the Contadora discussion. The move is likely to add to the Sandinistas' fears that the Contadora states will call on them to talk to the insurgents.

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USSR-FINLAND: Cruise Missile Overflight Issue

The USSR is portraying Finland's plans to strengthen its air defense as a reaction to US cruise missile deployments in Western Europe. [redacted]

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Pravda says a Finnish military official recently announced that his country is creating a new radar system to detect low-flying intruders and is taking other steps to defend itself against cruise missiles. He reportedly said that US cruise missiles entering Finnish airspace en route to the USSR from the Norwegian Sea would be destroyed.

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Foreign Minister Vayrynen in a speech last Sunday stressed that the ground-launched cruise missiles being deployed in Western Europe are not a direct threat to Finland. He said, however, that cruise missiles that could be launched from submarines in the Norwegian Sea would pose such a threat against which Finland is preparing itself. [redacted]

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The Finnish Air Force last month ordered an advanced surveillance and approach-control radar from a British firm as a replacement air traffic control radar for military and civil airfields. Deliveries reportedly are to begin in 1985. [redacted]

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Comment: The Soviets have periodically hinted that the terms of the Soviet-Finnish Mutual Assistance Treaty of 1948 obligate Finland to help defend Soviet territory against cruise missiles flying over Finland to the USSR. Soviet officials may raise the issue with Vayrynen when he visits Moscow later this month. [redacted]

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Helsinki wants to deflect any pressure from Moscow to react to the current INF deployments. To reassure the Soviets, the Finns may have decided to publicize their longstanding plans to strengthen their air defenses. They also want to discourage speculation at home that the USSR could use the pretext of possible cruise missile overflights to invoke the Treaty of 1948 possibly to request military consultations. [redacted]

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The British radar may have a limited capability to track small, low-flying targets, such as cruise missiles. It is not designed to do so, however. [redacted]

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WARSAW PACT: Meeting on Disarmament Conference

Deputy foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact reportedly will hold a meeting on or about next Wednesday to coordinate strategy for the Conference on Disarmament in Europe, which convenes on 17 January in Stockholm. A West German diplomat told the US Embassy in Moscow that it probably was to accommodate that scheduling, and not to demonstrate displeasure with Bonn's acceptance of INF deployments, that Soviet consultations with the West Germans on the conference scheduled for next Tuesday were canceled. A Soviet press article published on 25 November criticized INF as violating the spirit and letter of the Final Act of the Helsinki Agreement on CSCE and warned that it would complicate work at the Stockholm Conference. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Moscow will try to ensure that differences among its allies over INF countermeasures do not undercut the appearance of Pact unity on issues of concern to the Conference. The Soviets want to use the meeting in Stockholm to erode support in Western Europe for INF and other arms control positions. They probably are considering having Foreign Minister Gromyko appear at the opening session. [REDACTED]

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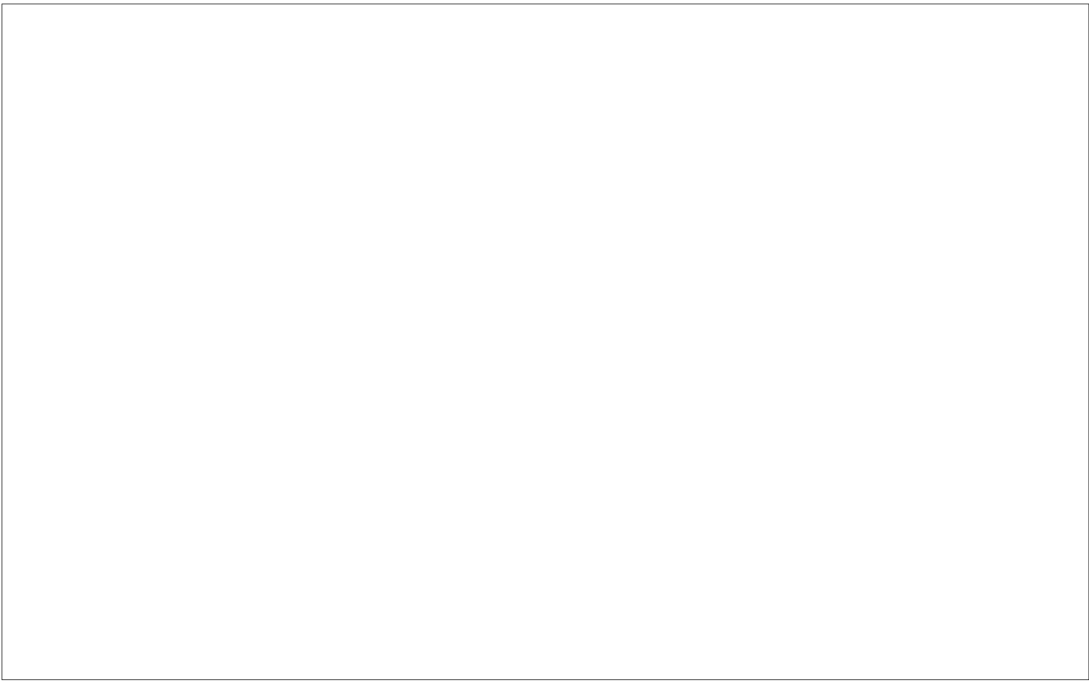
BULGARIA-NICARAGUA: Possible Arms Delivery



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CHINA-US: Purchase of More Wheat

Officials of the Chinese Embassy in Washington say that China will buy an additional 2 million tons of US wheat this month. The deal would bring total purchases of grain to the minimum of 6 million tons called for in the bilateral long-term grain agreement. The Chinese acknowledge, however, that not all of the grain actually will be delivered in 1983 as required. [REDACTED]

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Comment: The statement was designed to influence the ruling next week by the Department of Commerce on whether to recommend a 40-percent surcharge on imports of Chinese textiles. For the past year Beijing has linked purchases of US grain to US imports of Chinese textiles—the two largest areas of bilateral trade. China probably will buy the grain only if the surcharge on textiles is not imposed. [REDACTED]

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WEST GERMANY: Embattled Economics Minister

The Bundestag voted unanimously yesterday to lift Economics Minister Lambsdorff's immunity from prosecution, and the prosecutor's office will now proceed with charges against him. Press reports speculate that a formal indictment will be presented in a few days. Lambsdorff is accused of accepting approximately \$50,000 in campaign contributions for the Free Democrats from the Flick industrial concern in return for a favorable ruling on the firm's application for a tax waiver. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Lambsdorff has said he wants to review the list of charges before deciding whether to resign. Opposition parties are calling on him to quit, and, once the indictment is presented, Chancellor Kohl almost certainly will recognize that the pressure on him to replace Lambsdorff will increase. Kohl, however, would like to avoid the cabinet shuffle that Lambsdorff's departure would require. He particularly wants to avoid bringing Christian Social Union Chairman Strauss to Bonn. [REDACTED]

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NORTH KOREA: Foreign Ministry's Increased Influence

North Korea yesterday announced that Foreign Minister Ho Tam had been elevated to full membership on the party's Political Bureau. The decision was taken at a plenary meeting of the party Central Committee held from 29 November to 1 December. The plenum also announced lower-level appointments and, as is customary at such sessions, reviewed economic performance for 1983 and discussed the plan for next year. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Ho Tam's promotion provides the Foreign Ministry with more influence. It could portend an intensified diplomatic effort to reduce the damage to North Korea's reputation resulting from the bombing in Rangoon in October. Although the international campaign to condemn North Korea for that incident has had limited impact, P'yongyang is concerned that the campaign is eroding its standing in the Third World. [REDACTED]

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TAIWAN: Legislative Elections

Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang is confident of victory in the legislative elections today. Only 71 of the 379 seats in the legislature are up for election. Party officials, however, are concerned about the popularity of opposition militants and the possibility of violence. [REDACTED]

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Comment: At best, the ethnic Taiwanese opposition could increase its representation from nine to around 15 seats. As a result, the Kuomintang will maintain its overwhelming dominance of the legislature. Militant oppositionists are likely to make some gains, possibly at the expense of the moderate leadership of the opposition. Any spontaneous violence or any confrontational tactics by victorious militants could prompt the regime to put more restrictions on the opposition's political activities. [REDACTED]

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